

## THE GREEN ECONOMY

### INTRODUCTION

Maybe you have heard of the Green Economy? It has become the new buzzword in sustainability circles.

Industry, governments, and co-operations are finally beginning to understand the need for sustainable development at all levels of the economy. This needs to happen if we are to safeguard our planet's resources.

A green economy is simply defined as one in which there is low carbon growth and reduced pollution output, efficient and ethical use of resources (including conservation of biodiversity and social inclusivity), whilst fulfilling the needs of the economy.

It seems like a big ask, doesn't it?

#### **LET'S BREAK IT DOWN:**


Firstly, Green Economy is an economic not an environmental concept, BUT it includes economic, environmental, and social aspects.

Starting from the very moment that raw material is removed from the earth and all the way through the manufacturing process there are negative effects on the environment.

There has been a growing desire to resolve critical issues like pollution and climate change, so the green economy aims create sustainable, fair, and inclusive economic systems that tackle these issues.

Each level of society can contribute to the Green Economy. Let's take a look at some examples:

### **REDUCE CARBON CONSUMPTION AND REDUCE GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS**

 This can be achieved through green initiatives at each level:

**Government level:** pollution tax, energy and/or emission caps, incentives to lower emissions,

**Industry level:** sustainable energy creation, research initiatives, reduced reliance on fossil fuels

**Individual level:** walk or ride to work

### **INCREASED FOCUS ON CONSERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEM SERVICES**

**Government:** water usage caps, protected areas, caps on resource usages (e.g., fishing quotas),

**Industry:** sustainable/renewable resource use, research initiatives, recycling, reduction of waste and by-products, waste reduction

**Individual:** buy locally grown food

### **INCREASED FOCUS ON SOCIAL INCLUSIVITY**

**Government:** promoting minorities, education initiatives

**Industry:** in-company training and upliftment, company healthcare, maternity leave support

**Individual:** choosing to purchase only fair-trade goods and services

**The Green Economy can be a very efficient system capable of generating wealth, whilst protecting the environment and creation of jobs.**

Some examples of sustainable components of the green economy:



### ZERO - WASTE INITIATIVES

**Government:** Ban use of plastic bags or tax plastic bag usage

**Industry:** change in packing to recyclable and/or recycled products

e.g. Brewery using a compostable carrier instead of plastic

**Individual:** use a re-usable shopping bag, use compostable instead of single use plastics



e.g. Bonnie Bio-degradable Packing

<https://bonniebio.co.za/>

### ELIMINATION OF HARMFUL SUBSTANCES

**Government:** banning toxic substances e.g., DDT. Pollution controls and caps, banning of bisphenol A (BPA) in drinking bottles because it is a hormone disruptor

**Industry:** companies choosing to eliminate harmful substances from the production cycle.

**Individual:** choosing to purchase only fair-trade goods

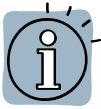
### REDUCING CARBON EMISSIONS

**Government:** setting target ranges for emissions, transitioning from coal-based energies. <https://www.gov.za/blog/desk-president-88>

**Industry:** companies commit to net zero emissions . <https://www.unpri.org/pri-blog/seven-major-companies-that-committed-to-net-zero-emissions-in-2021/9197.article>

**Individual:** ride your bike, purchase local food





**EDUCATOR  
HINT:**

Discuss these with your class and see if they have any disadvantages or advantages to add



There are many advantages to a greener economy.

But, there are also a few disadvantages to a greener economy. The initial step is challenging because companies need to accept accountability for the transformation. In developing countries this is especially challenging because companies must balance the needs for profitability with the needs of the environment.

**ADVANTAGES OF  
THE GREEN ECONOMY**

- Reduced consumption of raw materials.
- Reduction of waste.
- Creation of new jobs.
- Respect for the planet.

**DISADVANTAGES OF  
THE GREEN ECONOMY**

- Increased initial costs transferring to greener production methods.
- Consumers pay the extra costs of externalities.
- “Greenwashing” – using environmental rhetoric to sell goods and services without environmental change.

**LESSON PLANNING**

**STEP 1: Introduce the concept**

Ask your learners what they know about the Green Economy. See if they can name jobs they can think of in the green economy (expect answers like tourism) but explain that everybody needs to contribute to a greener society.

**STEP 2:** Discuss how all levels of society can contribute to more sustainable development.

The following videos could be helpful:

Why we need to grow the green economy?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m9AS6KT7a5Y>

Circular economy

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zCRKvDyyHmI>

**STEP 3:** Discuss how learners think a greener economy will affect their future job prospects. How will how much you understand environmental issues affect your job hire-ability?

## LESSON IDEAS

### GREEN ECONOMY POSTER

<b>GRADE</b>	5-7
<b>SUBJECTS</b>	Natural Science and Technology, Business economics
	The learners will create a poster indicating how different sectors can "green "themselves
<b>DURATION</b>	2 X 1-hour sessions
<b>RESOURCES</b>	Poster card, pens and/or CANVA or alternative digital programme

### THE DARK SIDE OF CHOCOLATE

<b>GRADE</b>	8-10
<b>SUBJECTS</b>	English
	The learners will write a commentary discussing the ethical dilemma involved in chocolate making and suggest potential solutions to mitigate negative effects.
<b>DURATION</b>	Initial setup 1 hr, write up 2 hours

**CROSS-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES:**

**ECONOMICS**

Have a class sale using only goods and services created with the environment in mind  
Introduce green habits- your school is part of the economy- so try and reduce its carbon footprint.



**REFERENCES**

<https://www.bankofcanadamuseum.ca/2022/04/teaching-the-green-economy/>

<https://kampos.com/blogs/blog/green-economy-what-is-green-economy-and-what-are-the-advantages>